

funding depends on how students perform on these tests! Proponents of this approach dismiss these concerns by saying "there is only one way to read and do math." Well then what are the battles about phonics versus whole language or new math versus old math about? There are continuing disputes about teaching all subjects as well as how to measure mastery of a subject matter. Once federal mandatory testing is in place however, those arguments will be settled by the beliefs of whatever regime currently holds sway in DC. Mr. Chairman, I would like my colleagues to consider how comfortable they would feel supporting this bill if they knew that in five years proponents of fuzzy math and whole language could be writing the NAEP?

Proponents of H.R. 1 justify the mandatory testing by claiming it holds schools "accountable." Of course, everyone is in favor of holding schools accountable but accountable to whom? Under this bill, schools remain accountable to federal bureaucrats and those who develop the state tests upon which participating schools performance is judged. Even under the much touted Straight "A's" proposal, schools which fail to live up to their bureaucratically-determined "performance goals" will lose the flexibility granted to them under this act. Federal and state bureaucrats will determine if the schools are to be allowed to participate in the Straight "A's" programs and bureaucrats will judge whether the states are living up to the standards set in the state's education plan—yet this is the only part of the bill which even attempts to debureaucratize and decentralize education!

Under the United States Constitution, the federal government has no authority to hold states "accountable" for their education performance. In the free society envisioned by the founders, schools are held accountable to parents, not federal bureaucrats. However, the current system of imposing oppressive taxes on America's families and using those taxes to fund federal education programs denies parental control of education by denying them control over their education dollars.

As a constitutional means to provide parents with the means to hold schools accountable, I have introduced the Family Education Freedom Act (H.R. 368). The Family Education Freedom Act restores parental control over the classroom by providing American parents a tax credit of up to \$3,000 for the expenses incurred in sending their child to private, public, parochial, other religious school, or for home schooling their children.

The Family Education Freedom Act returns the fundamental principle of a truly free economy to America's education system: what the great economist Ludwig von Mises called "consumer sovereignty." Consumer sovereignty simply means consumers decide who succeeds or fails in the market. Businesses that best satisfy consumer demand will be the most successful. Consumer sovereignty is the means by which the free society maximizes human happiness.

When parents control the education dollar, schools must be responsive to parental demands that their children receive first-class educations, otherwise, parents will find alternative means to educate their children. Furthermore, parents whose children are in public schools may use their credit to improve their schools by purchasing of educational tools such as computers or extracurricular activities

such as music programs. Parents of public school students may also wish to use the credit to pay for special services for their children.

According to a recent Manhattan Institute study of the effects of state policies promoting parental control over education, a minimal increase in parental control boosts the average SAT verbal score by 21 points and the student's SAT math score by 22 points! The Manhattan Institute study also found that increasing parental control of education is the best way to improve student performance on the NAEP tests.

I have also introduced the Education Quality Tax Cut Act (H.R. 369), which provides a \$3,000 tax deduction for contributions to K-12 education scholarships as well as for cash or in-kind donations to private or public schools. The Education Quality Tax Cut Act will allow concerned citizens to become actively involved in improving their local public schools as well as help underprivileged children receive the type of education necessary to help them reach their full potential. I ask my colleagues: "Who is better suited to lead the education reform effort: parents and other community leaders or DC-based bureaucrats and politicians?"

If, after the experience of the past thirty years, you believe that federal bureaucrats are better able to meet children's unique educational needs than parents and communities then vote for H.R. 1. However, if you believe that the failures of the past shows expanding federal control over the classroom is a recipe for leaving every child behind then do not settle for some limited state flexibility in the context of a massive expansion of federal power: Reject H.R. 1 and instead help put education resources back into the hands of parents by supporting my Family Education Freedom Act and Education Improvement Tax Cut Act.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this bill as it was reported out of committee. I believe that the underlying bill is a good piece of legislation that will go a long ways in making our schools better places of learning and our students more successful. I commend the chairman, Mr. BOEHNER, the ranking member, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, and my fellow New Democrat, Mr. ROEMER, for the bipartisan way in which this bill has been crafted.

I am pleased to see H.R. 1 include language supporting both music and arts education as well as character education. I am a strong supporter of both. We must ensure that our children receive a well rounded education which includes music and the arts. Society is growing increasingly concerned about the steady decline of our nation's core ethical values, especially in our children. Although parents should be the primary developers of character, the role of schools in character-building has become increasingly important.

I am pleased to see the increased emphasis H.R. 1 has placed on low-performing Title I schools. If we are to demand that our schools meet high standards of achievement, we must also ensure that schools serving low-income students receive sufficient funds to meet these students' needs. These much needed Title I funds will make a real difference in the academic lives of many of my young constituents.

I also support several other provisions of the bill including accountability measures, student mentoring and the retention of the Safe

Schools and 21st Century Learning Centers programs as separate initiatives.

I am extremely pleased to see that neither vouchers nor the "Straight A's" provision are included in the reported bill and am hopeful that they will not be attached as amendments. We have a remarkable consensus on this bill, but it is a fragile one. I urge my colleagues to protect this delicate balance by rejecting voucher or "Straight A's" proposals that would jeopardize passage of the bill.

While H.R. 1 substantially increases local flexibility, a "Straight A's" proposal only increases control at the state level. It will result in less funding to many local school districts, particularly those with low-income children.

Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed in our public school system. This bill takes a positive step forward toward helping students achieve academically and strengthening public schools.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, this bill makes some pretty big promises. It has the potential to dramatically change the public education system in this country. It authorizes significant levels of funding. It says to parents that Congress thinks education is a priority, and that we will make good on our goal—that every child in America should get a quality education.

But, Mr. Chairman, I sit on the Appropriations Subcommittee that funds education, and my experience tells me that we are a long way from being able to keep these promises. The budget we passed two weeks ago does not provide the funds to do everything we promise in this bill. At the end of the year, when push comes to shove, we will do what we've done for the past few years—we will short education.

Tonight and tomorrow we will talk about how we are going to provide more funding than ever for our most disadvantaged students through Title I, about how we will give states flexibility to determine their fiscal needs in the areas of teacher recruitment, teacher development and school renovation, and about how we will demand results for our efforts. These are all worthy goals, and I support them.

But without funding, this new flexibility becomes a gilded prison. States will have to decide whether to spend their money on facilities, teachers or testing. The bill does not provide any additional funds for school construction, and does not provide enough to help states develop the new mandated tests or recruit more teachers to reduce class sizes. In fact, the rule will not even allow these issues to be discussed on the floor.

Unless we work to ensure that sufficient money is included for education in the appropriations process, then all we are doing today is making empty promises.

When the annual appropriations melee begins toward the end of the year, I hope the American people will remind every member who votes for this bill that they have a promise to keep. Every member who holds a press conference to tout their commitment to education after their vote for this bill should be prepared to follow through.

Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity to do great things for education. But this legislation is only a down payment. I hope we remember to pay the rest of the bill.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, as a freshman Member of Congress it has been exciting to be a part of the House Education and Workforce Committee, working to draft a bipartisan